



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## CRITICAL NOTICE.

*After the Exile: a Hundred Years of Jewish History and Literature.*

By P. HAY HUNTER, Minister of Yester. (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1890.)

*After the Exile* is a delightful book ; it can hardly be recommended too warmly. Indeed, so far as I know, Mr. Hunter's volumes, in their own way and for their own period, are quite unique. For here, for the first time in English, we have a narrative of a hundred most important years of Biblical history, in which the results of criticism are presented skilfully, popularly, and, above all, without any *arrière pensée* or polemical motive. Mr. Hunter does not aggressively combat traditional views ; he does not seek to overwhelm or startle the reader by an elaborate display of erudition or unorthodoxy. One can imagine a person adverse to (because ignorant of) Biblical criticism, who had happened to take up *After the Exile*, reading it through with interest and pleasure from start to finish, and remaining happily unconscious that he had perused a book which, without the critics, could never have been composed. Nevertheless, the critical results are scarcely ever divested of their proper emphasis and importance.

The hundred years of Mr. Hunter's narrative comprise the period from the return of the Jews from Babylon, in 537, to the second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem, about 432 B.C. The chief source and authority for that period are the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Now it would scarcely be too much to assume that, of all the books of the Hebrew Scriptures, these two are commonly adjudged to be the dullest, and are read the least. Yet it is mainly out of this material that Dr. Hunter has constructed a narrative that is never dull, and of which the interest rises frequently to fascination. A Jewish reviewer cannot help reflecting with sadness and regret upon the utter impossibility of such a book as this issuing from the pen of a *Jewish* minister. Will the heavy bondage to traditional opinions, which, among some other reasons, would effectually prevent its appearance, never come to an end ?

That *After the Exile* is so interesting and valuable is due to a happy combination in Mr. Hunter of several qualities necessary

to a Biblical historian. First and foremost our author is a thorough student, well acquainted with the literature of his subject, and able to make use of it with independence and discretion. Only very rarely are there traces of what one might call a pre-critical period. Thus, a disciple of Graf would now scarcely speak of "the office and title of the High Priest" as having "come down from a remote antiquity" (Vol. I., pp. 251-55). Criticism would find something at which to demur in the statement that the Jewish people, after the captivity, *found their way back* to their "*primitive belief* in the divine unity," or that "the masses" in the generations immediately preceding the exile "had ceased to be worshippers of one God" (Vol. I., pp. 78-80). The *seventh* new moon was not a specially "popular holiday" (Vol. II., p. 192), and this error is perhaps the cause of the little slip in the first foot-note upon p. 193.

There will, of course, remain for long—perhaps for ever—differences of opinion between critics respecting many a detail in the history of the fifth century B.C.; but I am inclined to think that in a few instances Mr. Hunter may find upon reconsideration that the more preponderating weight of evidence is against his own views. Thus, in the early chapters of Vol. I., several Psalms (*e.g.* xlv., lxix., lxxix.) are used to illustrate the condition of the Jews in Babylon, which more probably belong to a later period. In spite of Ewald, it seems to me very doubtful whether Ps. lxxxix. and cxxxii. can refer to Zerubbabel (Vol. I., p. 226); and, again, Prof. Cheyne will, I fancy, be able to show that a Maccabean date for Ps. lxxxiii. is more likely than the reign of Artaxerxes (Vol. II., p. 90). Stade, in his *Geschichte*, and Kuenen, in his *Onderzoek*, have brought cogent arguments to prove that the chronicler's account in Ezra iii. of an attempted rebuilding of the Temple some sixteen years before Haggai's first prophecy is very improbable. If their views meet with general acceptance, Vol. I., pp. 100-119, will need revision in another edition. In the excellent account of the early Sopherim, in Vol. I., pp. 272-289, it should have been more definitely indicated that the Torah which the priest-scribes studied was to a great extent their own compilation. In Vol. II. this fact comes out more clearly. But surely it is anything but "probable in the highest degree" that the scroll which Ezra read out to the assembled people upon the first of Tishri, 444, "was the Pentateuch in substantially its present form" (Vol. II., p. 225). The original "Priestly Code" had been, it is true, already enlarged by the inclusion of the "Law of Holiness"; but it is unlikely that the amalgamation of these documents with the "Jehovistic" and Deuteronomic elements of the Pentateuch had already taken place. In a note Mr. Hunter argues that the article in the covenant "as to mixed marriages (Neh. x. 30) has no basis at all

in the Priestly Code. It rests on Ex. xxxiv. 12-16, and on the Deuteronomic Code (vii. 2, 3)" (Vol. II., p. 225, n. 1). But the spirit of the Priestly Code is certainly against any dimming of Israel's sanctity by contact with the heathen. (*Cf.* such passages as Gen. xxvi. 35 ; Num. xxv., xxxiii. 50-56.)

Mr. Hunter's mastery of his authorities would not have sufficed to produce *After the Exile*. Rarer gifts than those of patient reading and discriminating acquisition are necessary for an historian. And dramatic power, happy expression, ready insight and vivid imagination, are perhaps no where more urgently required than in an history of the hundred years after the Babylonian exile. Frequently a casual verse in Ezra or Nehemiah must be picturesquely expanded into a page before its whole meaning can be brought fully home to the reader's mind. Or, again, the early growth of a new tendency, which finds expression later on in mighty deeds, must be represented by an ingenious mixture of inference and combination. For a single example of either procedure, I may refer to the first chapter of Vol. II., *Ezra at Jerusalem*, and to the thirteenth of Vol. I., *The House of Zadok*. Jewish history in these hundred years can frequently receive light and explanation from the contemporary history of the Persian Empire, although the two seem often enough to have very few points of contact. Mr. Hunter is, however, careful never to neglect the setting of his picture in the framework of universal history. Compare for instance the use he makes of the campaign of Cambyzes against Egypt (Vol. I., p. 128). It is but very seldom that our author's gifts of historic imagination and forcible expression lead him a little astray. Thus the antithesis, "Into the exile there went a generation of heretics, out of it there came a generation of devotees" (Vol. I., p. 80), is too pointed in either term. The universalist and spiritual reasons (Vol. I., pp. 45-49), which, according to Mr. Hunter, led some among the exiles to take no personal part in the return, are ingenious but improbable. It must be remembered that the particularist movement of Ezra and his school springs from Babylon. The reasons why so many keen patriots or keen religionists must have remained behind in Babylon are obscure ; but compare Stade, *Geschichte*, Vol. II., p. 107. Clever as the reasoning is which leads up to the statement, it is hardly safe to say that "Ezra, when he promulgated the Torah, did so in compliance with a popular demand" (Vol. II., p. 186). A very excellent use is made of the prophecies of Joel, but it is, to my mind, very doubtful whether the "internal evidence" that Joel wrote during the reign of Xerxes is as "strong" as Mr. Hunter supposes (Vol. II., p. 239). Kuenen (*Onderzoek*, II., p. 342) is, I think, more probably right in postponing his date to some indefinite period after Ezra. Still, to give history its necessary life

and colour, one must assign the literature of one's subject to *definite* periods, and though it is not so likely that Jonah, like Ruth, was written during or just after the dissolution of the mixed marriages, the admirable account of that strange little book in the third chapter of his second volume makes the reader very glad that Mr. Hunter, at all events, has made up his mind upon the matter. For it *might* have been written then, even though it *was* written later, and its use is, therefore, quite legitimate to paint with vividness and power the opposing religious currents of the time. Nor must the caution in our author's preface be forgotten : "I have purposely avoided touching on questions of Biblical criticism in this book, confining myself to the historical form. Hence an appearance, which is only an appearance, of presenting disputed points, as if they were undisputed."

One reason which makes Mr. Hunter's narrative of this particular period so specially pleasant to the Jewish reader is its perfect objectivity. We are not bothered by those interminable and monotonous allusions to the moral evils and inadequacies of particularism and legalism with which almost every Christian narrator of this portion of Old Testament history thinks it necessary to interlard his pages. Of course, there is a page or two of moralising at the end, but it is gently and impartially done, and it is obvious that Jew and Christian must, for a long while yet, have somewhat different morals to draw from the events of *After the Exile*. But full justice is done by Mr. Hunter to the aims and motives of Ezra and his school. Unsympathetic as their views are to many of us now, it is carefully pointed out how they were partially justified by the circumstances of the time. With one possible exception (Vol. II., p. 41) Mr. Hunter never applies misleading modern catchwords and categories to the thoughts and feelings of that distant and different age. His book can be read with equal profit and pleasure by Christian and by Jew ; it is to be hoped that it may be succeeded before very long by a companion volume upon another period of Old Testament history. It should be added, in conclusion, that the book is attractively got up, and is printed in large, clear type upon good paper. The omission of an index will, I trust, be supplied in an early second edition.

C. G. MONTEFIORE.